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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

**Letter dated 20 January 2014 from the Permanent
Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United
Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the
Human Rights Council**

I hereby send you a copy of the press release of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan concerning the commemoration of the twenty-fourth anniversary of Black January in Azerbaijan.

I would be highly appreciative if you could kindly circulate the present letter and the annex thereto* as a document of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 4.

(Signed) Murad N. Najafbayli

Ambassador, Permanent Representative

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

[English only]

Commemoration of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Black January

Today is a Day of National Mourning in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thousands of people are visiting Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the memory of the heroism of courageous sons of the Azerbaijani people perished on 20 January 1990 for the sake of freedom and independence.

20 January 1990 went down in the history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic and, at the same time, heroic dates for our people. Twenty four years ago, on that horrific night, patriotic people of Azerbaijan decided that the honor and dignity of their native country, the freedom of their nation are above anything else and became martyrs. Although it has been 24 years since Soviet troops perpetrated this bloody massacre in Azerbaijan, our people have not forgotten the pain of those horrendous days and are expressing their contempt for the then leaders of the Soviet empire.

Former Soviet leadership decided to stifle the protest of the Azerbaijani people by using military force. Over the night from 19 to 20 January 1990, large contingent of Soviet Army and its internal troops stormed Baku and some regions of Azerbaijan which caused a great number of casualties. Women, children, elderly, even medical servants, ambulances were brutally targeted by the Soviet army.

Soviet authorities tried to conceal the scale of this tragic crime from its own people and the international community. But the grave consequences of this operation were so obvious! As a result of the bloodshed in Baku 131 innocent civilians were killed, 611 people wounded, hundreds of people arrested. State of emergency was proclaimed in the capital of Azerbaijan which lasted more than one year.

The massacre perpetrated by the Soviet military machine in Azerbaijan was an act of unseen aggression and execution of citizens by its own state. It represented a flagrant breach of the Constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan SSR. By sending troops to crush the civilian population on that day, the USSR government flouted the UN Charter, the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, international law and a number of clauses of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of which it had been a party.

This despicable act could not prevent the Azerbaijani people from the intention of getting independence from Soviet Union. Brave struggle of the Azerbaijani people which entered into decisive phase after the 20 January tragedy led to its logical end; in October 1991 Azerbaijan regained its independence.

Today, Azerbaijani people by visiting and laying flowers on the graves of heroes are paying once again tribute to the victims of the 20th January tragedy. The life and struggle of the martyrs are the source of pride of today's and next generations. Thanks to their heroism, today, there is an independent Azerbaijani statehood among world nations. The sacred task of all Azerbaijanis is to defend and further strengthen the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan gained at the expense of great sacrifices.